

TABLE Cultures positive for *C trachomatis* from CTA and ENT swabs from 294 women

Cultures from	No (%) positive
Both swabs	35 (11.9)
CTA swab only	9 (3.1)
ENT swab only	6 (2.0)
Total	50 (17.0)

We found the new CTA swab to be at least comparable with the ENT swab for collecting specimens to culture *C trachomatis*. The CTA swab detected 88% of

positive cases, while the ENT swab detected 82%. An added advantage for use of the CTA swab is its relative inexpensiveness, which is important to hospitals. We therefore feel that the CTA swab can be recommended for use in diagnosing chlamydial infections.

Yours faithfully,  
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## References

1. Ripa KT. Biological principals of the cultivation of *Chlamydia trachomatis* in cell monolayers. In: *Chlamydia trachomatis in genital and related infection*. Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1982:25-9.
2. Mårdh PA, Zeeberg B. The toxic effect of sampling swabs and transportation tubes on the formation of intracytoplasmic inclusions of *Chlamydia trachomatis*. *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* 1981;57:268-72.
3. Kallings I, Mårdh P-A. Sampling and specimen handling in the diagnosis of genital *Chlamydia trachomatis* infections. In: *Chlamydia trachomatis in genital and related infection*. Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1982:21-4.

TO THE EDITOR, *Genitourinary Medicine*

## Effect of epidemiological treatment of contacts in preventing recurrences of non-gonococcal urethritis

Sir,

The imaginative study by Fitzgerald (*British Journal of Venereal Diseases* 1984;60:312-5) contains some fundamental flaws in design and interpretation.

The apparently better results with prolonged (3 week) courses of tetracyclines (mostly triple tetracycline) could have been,

and probably were, a manifestation of selection bias for compliance in this group. "Men were all offered three weeks treatment . . . but some defaulted before they had received the whole course." Those who defaulted formed the group taking short (1 to 2 week) courses. They were less compliant to treatment, and were therefore inherently less likely to respond for reasons other than the number of tablets they were given.

Comparison of treatment in 1978 with treatment in 1980 is also potentially erroneous. In this case, the results were

similar and agreed with those of other workers, which makes it less likely that an error occurred. Nevertheless, a deterioration in response to tetracycline could have been masked by the epidemiological treatment of contacts and by a lower rate of reinfection.

Finally, when a difference is claimed it is surely mandatory to calculate the probability of this occurring by chance.

Yours faithfully

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## Notices

### Second World Congress on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

The 2nd world congress on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) will be held at the Centre International de Congres de Paris (CIP), Porte Maillot, Paris, from 25 to 29 June 1986 under the patronage of the World Health Organisation and the International Union against Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses. The general theme will be "STDs and their social and economic consequences".

Typewritten abstracts of papers should be submitted, in French or English, before 30 June 1985 to the Director, Dr A Siboulet, Institut Alfred Fournier, 25 boulevard Saint-Jacques, 75680 Paris, Cedex 14, France.

For further information concerning registration, travel arrangements, hotels, etc, please contact the Commissariat General, 4 Villa d'Orleans, 75014 Paris, France.

### International meeting of dermatological research

The seventh meeting devoted to dermatological research will be held under the auspices of the Société de Recherche Dermatologique at Louvain University in Brussels on September 19 to 21, 1985. This meeting will be organised by the unit of occupational and environmental dermatology (director Professor J M Lachapelle).

Further information and application forms can be obtained from: Docteur D Van Neste, Unité de Dermatologie Professionnelle et de l'Environnement, Université Catholique de Louvain, UCL 3033, Clos Chapelle-aux-Champs, 30-B-1200 Bruxelles, Belgium.

### Third International Forum of Andrology

The Third International Forum on Andrology will be held in Paris on 18 and 19 June, 1985. Topics for discussion will be: androgens (on the first day) and the epididymis (on the second day).

For further information please contact Professor G Arvis, Department of Urology, Hôpital Saint-Antoine, 184 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Antoine, 75571 Paris, Cedex 12, France.

### Attention — new dates

Monday 17 and Tuesday 18 June.